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**Swampscott Boy Loses Fingers Making Fireworks
Charges Against Store Illegally Selling Materials Used**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, Swampscott Fire Chief Richard Carmody and Swampscott Police Chief Madigan announced a criminal complaint was sought against the owner of Dee's Corner Convenience Store in Lynn for selling fireworks to a 13-year old Swampscott boy who lost two fingers in an explosion last month. A magistrates hearing on the charges were held today in Lynn District Court.

Swampscott Boy Injured Making Fireworks

On April 26, 2008 an explosion shook Swampscott's Melvin Street neighborhood setting off car alarms and summoning police. Swampscott Police Chief Madigan said, "The source of the explosion was not discovered until May 1, 2008 when around 5 p.m. a 13-year old boy detonated an explosion in his kitchen that amputated the tips of two fingers." He was making improvised explosive devices (IED's) including homemade fireworks. The youth indicated he had previously made and detonated IED's including the one on April 26. He also indicated that he used materials purchased at a local convenience store. The juvenile was summonsed to court to face charges of possession of an infernal machine and throwing or placing an improvised explosive device.

Charges Against Store Illegally Selling Materials Used

A criminal complaint was sought against the owner of Dee's Corner Convenience Store in Lynn for selling fireworks to the 13-year old Swampscott boy. The boy apparently purchased sufficient quantity of a small firework to remix the powder into his own larger homemade fireworks and explosive devices. The storeowner is charged with the illegal possession and sale of fireworks.

Chief Carmody said, "Holding the convenience store accountable for violating the law is an important step towards protecting other young people and to send a message to stores large and small to take these items off their shelves. It is the adults in our society that have to step forward and take responsibility for protecting our young people."

Fireworks Are Illegal Except for Licensed Professionals

State Fire Marshal Coan said, "The possession and use of all fireworks by private citizens is illegal in Massachusetts. This includes Class C fireworks, which are sometimes falsely called 'safe and sane.' Examples of these are sparklers, party poppers, snappers, firecrackers, and spinners." He added, "Let's keep explosives in the hands of professionals where they belong."

Joint Investigation

This incident is being investigated by members of the Swampscott Police and Fire Departments and state police assigned to the State Fire Marshal's North Team and the bomb squad. The Department of Social Services conducted an independent investigation.

Swampscott Fire Chief Richard Carmody said, "This incident unfortunately demonstrates the danger of the illegal use of fireworks by amateurs. In a post Columbine world, we must take every act of setting a fire, making an explosive, making a bomb threat extremely serious because of the very real risk of harm and the impact on the community as a whole. These acts are not phases that children will grow out of and need to be addressed by properly trained professionals."

Chief Madigan said, "Because we take the safety of our students and our community so seriously, together we delivered presentations to the Swampscott Middle School students today to encourage their critical thinking skills about the consequences to themselves by using illegal fireworks." The presentation will present information on the chemistry of these materials, what makes them so unpredictable, and what safety precautions professionals take.

Fireworks Caused \$1.5 Million in Losses in the Past Decade

In the past decade (1998-2007) there have been 677 major fire and explosion incidents involving illegal fireworks reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). These 677 fires and explosions caused 15 civilian injuries, nine fire service injuries, one civilian fatality and an estimated dollar loss of \$1.5 million. This is quite a substantial amount since most fireworks related fires are outside brush fires and do not usually have high loss figures. A majority of these fires occurred during the week of the Fourth of July holiday.